

Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

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*A message from
Congressman Elijah E. Cummings*



It is both a privilege and honor to represent you in the United States Congress. While serving you, I will continue outreach efforts to further inform you of legislative action in Congress. I welcome your advice. Government "by the people" is the cornerstone of my legislative philosophy.

*Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress*

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Congressman Cummings Calls for Cautious Approach to U.S. Policy on Iraq

In response to hundreds of constituent letters urging against U.S. military force in Iraq, Congressman Cummings called for caution in dealing with Saddam Hussein. In addition, along with the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressman Cummings opposed any unilateral first-strike action by the United States.

Congressman Cummings said, "There is no question that the Iraqi regime poses serious threats. At the same time, fundamental questions remain to be answered before we commit American men and women to the field of battle in the Middle East."

On Sept. 24, Congressman Cummings joined a bipartisan group of 20 Members of Congress for a classified White House briefing with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and CIA Director George Tenet. The briefing gave Members of Congress the opportunity to learn more about President Bush's resolution on Iraq.

The Resolution requests that Congress grant President Bush unlimited authority to take action against Iraq, including the use of military force, without any further congressional consultation or approval.

In order to decide whether or not to vote for this resolution, Congressman Cummings said that the Bush Administration must respond to the following concerns expressed by the American people:

- **How imminent is any threat** to U.S. troops in the Middle East region, U.S. allies or Americans at home.

- **The loss of life:** The consequences of the various courses of action in the Middle East, including military and civilian casualties, regional war following use of military force against Iraq, diminished capability to conduct the war on terror, and damage to the U.S. economy.
- **Exit Strategy:** The long term policy for the region after any military action in Iraq, the impact of military action upon the balance of power in the Middle East, and a U.S. commitment to the democratic and human rights of the people in the region.

Congressman Cummings noted that Pentagon officials have told Congress that the war against Iraq could cost anywhere between \$100 billion to \$200 billion. In addition, peacekeeping efforts in Iraq following the possible overthrow of Saddam Hussein could require up to 75,000 U.S. troops and a \$16.2 billion, per year. If the U.S. took unilateral action against Iraq, it would incur most of this cost.

"These are just some of the important questions that the President, the Congress and the American people as a whole must address in a cautious, yet effective manner, before taking military action against Iraq," Congressman Cummings noted.

Save the date:

On Tuesday, October 22, 2002, Congressman Cummings will host a Community Meeting about the Drug-Free Communities Act. The meeting will be held in Baltimore from 6 to 8 p.m. Further details will be available in mid-October.

Congressman Cummings Announces \$519,652 Grant for Maryland Public Television

Emphasizing the significant role public television plays for two million households in Maryland, Congressman Cummings announced that he secured a \$519,652 federal grant for Maryland Public Television (MPT) to upgrade its technology. Maryland's Senators Paul S. Sarbanes, Barbara A. Mikulski and Congressman Benjamin L. Cardin also helped secure this grant.

The grant will specifically be awarded to WGPT-36 to convert its system from analogue broadcasting to digital broadcasting, according to Robert Sestili, MPT Station Manager. Digital broadcasting would allow MPT to offer more channels.

"Public television provides educational programming such as *Sesame Street*, *Mister Roger's Neighborhood* and *Barney & Friends* that introduces children to the wonders of reading and learning," Congressman Cummings said. "This grant will help increase the availability of these programs."

Anti-Drug Legislation Pushed by Congressman Cummings Receives \$47 million in Federal Grants

Due to legislation pushed by Congressman Cummings, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy announced the awarding of \$45.5 million in federal grants for community anti-drug efforts and \$2 million for the CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) program.

The grants will fund the following:

- **\$6.8 million** in for 70 new communities to participate in the Drug-Free Communities program. This program provides federal matching grants to citizen groups who have taken it upon themselves to fight drug abuse in their neighborhoods. In addition, because of an amendment introduced by Congressman Cummings that was included in the legislation, a major portion of the \$6.8 million will specifically fund economically-disadvantaged communities.

"I'm pleased that these funds will put a major emphasis on supporting economically disadvantaged areas across the country," Congressman Cummings said. "America's poorest communities often suffer most from drug abuse and the range of criminal activities and social maladies that result from illegal drug trade. The same lack of resources that makes these communities vulnerable to drugs in the first place also creates barriers to mounting and sustaining community efforts to fight the problem."
- **\$38.6 million** to continue supporting 462 anti-drug community coalition programs nationwide. This includes funding for Baltimore's Health Educators Linking Parents and Students (HELPS) Coalition.

- **\$2 million** to fund the new National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute that will be administered by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA). The institute will train leaders to more effectively run community-based anti-drug organizations.

As the Ranking Member of the Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Congressman Cummings was instrumental in adding language in the legislation that especially allocated resources to economically-disadvantaged communities. The bipartisan legislation, *H.R. 2291: The Extension of the Authorization of the Drug-Free Communities Support Program*, was passed by both Houses and signed into law in December 2001.

Generations X, Y & Wealth: Congressman Cummings Hosts Forum on Creating Wealth

Due to concerns that many young people are falling into deep debt at a very early age, Congressman Cummings hosted an issues forum entitled "Generations X, Y and Wealth," to present strategies for building strong financial assets. The issues forum was held on Sept. 12, 2002, as part of the 32nd Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference.

The forum, which was filled to capacity, was moderated by multimillionaire trial attorney and MBC Cable Network Founder Willie Gary. Economist and syndicated columnist Dr. Julianne Malveaux joined Gary in moderating the forum. Other panelists included Fannie Mae Foundation President & CEO, **Stacey H. Davis**; PBS series *Moneywise* host **Kelvin Boston**; Howard University business graduate student **Stephanie Brown**; and business owner **Elana James**, who rose from the projects of Chicago to owning several McDonald's Restaurants.

At the forum, Brown who is a graduate business student shared her concerns about the lack of financial discipline on college campuses, "Through the influence of pop culture, many young adults get carried away by trying to keep up with the latest fashion trends. As a result, when the economy suffers, they are stuck paying large credit card payments, in addition to their basic needs."

The panelists, each of whom have achieved financial success, then discussed the importance of developing the following habits in order to build wealth:

- Writing a financial plan and having a written budget
- Saving a percentage of one's income, whether the person makes minimum wage or earns a six-digit salary.

Congressman Cummings noted, "By listening to these financially-successful role models, I hope young people will be able to learn about the pitfalls of credit card debt and realize the benefits of investing their resources wisely at an early age."